1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

294 [292] shoe, so that the sinew will not be subjected to too much wear. Mukluks are rarely seen but may be purchased locally from traders.[1] Piping is inserted in the seams of moccasins and mittens, serving less as decoration than to prevent the penetration of cold.

291 294 Children's foot duffel often consists of a woolen or flannel rag simply wrapped around the foot; sometimes rabbit skin, which has been dried outdoors in cold weather, is used for this purpose. Adult duffel is cut from old woolen blankets, the pattern being said to follow an old moccasin pattern which was abandoned a long time ago. Material of the required size is first folded along the diagonal (a–b) as shown in Fig. 6, B, and is then again folded along (c–d). The rectangle of folded material thus obtained is now cut along a curved line. What will be the upper layer is now cut as illustrated by the broken line and the garment sewn around the toe and side thus making a loose slipper. The heel is sewn to within an inch of the bottom of the lower layer, which is then cut to square off the heel and sewn. An ankle wrap of the same material is added, but no lacing is used to keep this part in place since the outer moccasin lacing will do so. Felt insoles are sometimes worn as additional duffel.

294 177 Although aboriginally the Upper Laird Indians made the parka, today there are only a few women who know how to cut this garment, which is usually purchased. Native parkas are manufactured from doeskin cloth or canvas. Mrs. Man made a parka during the period of field work (Fig. 6, A) and explained that in her country, around Fort Laird, the garment continued to be manufactured. Two pieces are cut of the parka body (I) and sewn together back to front (b–d) and (e–g). The front of the parka is cut down from the neck as indicated by the broken line. The sleeve (II) is sewn from (e') to (f) and then attached to the body (e') matching (e), and (d'), (d). The hood (III) is sewn from (b) to (c) and then stitched with opening (a–b) being sewn to the neck. In the sewing, point (b) matches the back center of the neck, and points (a) the front center of the neck on either side of the cut. When the hood is open it will be seen that there are two points (a). This pattern undoubtedly reflects the influence of commercially manufactured garments.

296 Women's dresses, underwear and stockings are worn for about a week before being laundered. Men may wear their clothes for two weeks or longer before washing. Girls or women wash clothes in galvanized iron tubs which are set on the ground or floor (Pl. 10, A). Water is heated on an open fire and poured into the tub, soap powder also being added. The laundress sits on a low box or fallen tree, or squats on the ground over the vessel. Washboards are not employed, although these are available at the store. Squeezing the soapy water out of the garment with the right hand, the woman at the same time twists it between her two fists in a circular movement. The entire garment is gone over several times in this way. Clothes are not rinsed. When clean, the article is stretched to shape and thrown over a line strung near the camp. In traveling, garments, especially diaper cloths, are often spread on willows to dry. There is no common washday, a wife or daughter doing this task as the need arises.

301 *Adornment.* The principal ornaments worn by women are a rosary and a variety of hair ornaments, including combs with artificial flowers, clips, ribbons, and barrettes. Sometimes girls appear at dances with curlers in their hair. Men wear rings and arm garters. Both sexes frequently have wristwatches.

● [305]

[1] On Christmas morning (1940) Harvey Cross, a Nahane Indian, wore a very decorative pair of mukluks.

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

IDEATIONAL CULTURE

THE third major division of Kaska culture is built principally around the ideas and attitudes which the Indians direct toward the supernatural, natural, and social environments. These ideas, in many cases underlying behaviors described in the technical and social cultures, serve both adaptive and adjustive functions but in addition fulfill the important need of securing the individual's personal adjustment toward his known universe. Through these thought patterns the Indian strives to understand his experience.

In this division we will describe beliefs ranging from the fields of religion to natural history and human biology. We will discuss behaviors toward the supernatural environment and present activities illustrating the motivating role of other ideas. An attempt will also be made to understand the patterned, conscious and unconscious, thought and emotional processes of the people, and to outline the breakdown of rational control which occurs in some Indians when under the influence of alcohol or in mental disease.

NUMBERS AND MEASURES

Although the western system of numeration has been universally adopted in the Kaska area, few individuals are capable of extending such reckoning beyond one hundred. Arithmetical calculations are limited to simple mental additions and subtraction. No ritual or symbolic significance of numbers could be obtained.

The standard English system of weights and measures is in use, but the ability to understand these is not evenly developed. Most men have a fairly clear conception of mass measures, such as pounds, but a much more limited comprehension of length. When traveling along the crooked courses of rivers, Indians often refer to distance in terms of the number of points of land that must be rounded rather than the mileage that remains to be covered. There is keen interest in translating the distance between two known locales into miles but individual estimates are often widely at variance. White men are regarded as authoritative sources of such information, the ethnographer's maps being several times utilized in order to measure the distance from Lower Post to individuals' trap lines. Volume measures are also difficult for people to estimate, especially if a container is larger than five gallons.

In sewing the method of measurement is to compare the material to the span of the hand or the length of the arm. Rules, measuring rods, and squares are not used in carpentry or sewing.

Most Indians own clocks and pocket or wrist watches. These, however, are not primarily used to order time since most people are unable to read the dials and the measurement of time, like other measures, is only gradually being learned. Disagreement between time pieces is often considerable, especially in winter when, if a clock stops and there is no radio, the owner is only poorly able to guess at what hour to reset the instrument. The confusion resulting from Lower Post being on the boundary of two time zones is also partly responsible for the discrepancy between time pieces in summer. Individuals are not governed by time in the performance of customary activities.

By means of journals or by marking off the passage of days on a small calendar, an effort

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

805 is made to keep track of the date. Alongside the use of this calendrical system, attention is still paid to dividing the year by moons. Instead of following the aboriginal system of referring to each new moon by a descriptive word or phrase (as, for example, "Moose moon" to designate the month when moose are fat), an effort is now made to correlate the moon with the western calendar system. This leads to some confusion. Thus the new moon around August 12, 1945 was referred to as "August moon" by one man but as "September moon" by another. However, opinion generally identifies the moon with the name of the following month. The Indians have kept track of the years only since about 1914. "Before we don't know years," Old Man explained. It may be added that since then, the Indian's memory for years is also not too reliable. As a result of the earlier ignorance of years, few older informants are certain of their ages. Some attempt has been made by the Indian Agents to determine ages by reference to the person's development at the time of the Klondike gold rush in 1898 or the outbreak of the European war in 1914.

The seasons are not precisely correlated with the calendar months in the thinking of the people and such "natural" divisions of the year hold considerable popular interest. The first dry snow, occurring in late October, is the beginning of winter. Spring comes when the crust of the snow begins to melt and the ice goes out in the rivers. Summer is the subsequent, relatively brief period of hot days, while fall follows when the deciduous trees begin to lose their color. Fall is also the time when game is fat and the bull moose begins, or is expected to begin, to rut. All these phenomena are looked for and their appearance is associated with important changes in cultural activities.

LORE AND LEARNING

[181] 773 177 539 Kaska culture is characterized by little speculative or abstract thought. Aboriginal myths represent the limit of cosmological speculation and, in some cases, have become fused with western religious ideas. This may be illustrated by the creation myth obtained from Nitla.

The world was made by Jesus. At first there was a flood of salt water and only the sky was above the deep. Jesus then told the rat to plunge into the water and bring up some ground. The rat tried but "couldn't make it." The water was too deep and he died. Then Jesus sent a small duck (a species with a distinctive head and a cry like "crrrrr")[1] down under the water to get ground. "He catch the ground. He come up, let him go. Ground soon grow and make big and bigger." The earth grew from the size of a little island. Jesus then sent a wolf down to see how big the ground was getting. The wolf began to run around the island but never came back. "Too big that ground. The wolf become gone." Everything in the world originated from Jesus.

"Jesus, he make Injun. No Injun first time. Jesus think about it. Make ground, willows, anything grow. No hill, nothing. Just like dirt the ground. He make lots of birds; leave 'em anyplace. Birds sit down and sing. This ground alive. Birds live and grow." Then Jesus made the whitefish, trout, grayling, and other fish. They were intended as food on which the Indian could maintain himself. Jesus also created the moose and caribou. "These Injun grub. If man lucky he get this grub; if hard luck maybe he lost his game."

Then Jesus created the Indian. The first man was made out of mud and ashes, Jesus tracing the human figure in the soil—"head, legs, arm, hair, eye, anything." Jesus left the image and it was like a man asleep. When Jesus spoke to the figure, however, it couldn't answer. It couldn't

[1] This would seem to be one of the crested species of duck.

1: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945) 1949 ND12 Nahane ND12

Adjustive expression. Up to this point discussion has been limited to aspects of utilitarianism revealed in adaptive resourcefulness. We now propose to examine the expression of this dominant motivation in the individual's psychological adjustment to phenomena like time, direction, and concept formation.

The Indian's slight concern with abstract systems of generalization is reflected first in the relative timelessness of the people. The best apprehended divisions of time are either based on the alternation between night and day, the passage of seasons, or else derived from the duration of cultural tasks (such as the period of time required to build a toboggan, make snowshoes, or clean a hide). Superimposed upon these relatively concrete divisions of time are the introduced patterns of a more abstract apportioning of the day, month, and year. Why have the Indians been slow in orienting themselves to the latter temporal divisions? Any explanation for this lag must take into account the dominant motivation which is threatened by these more abstract systems. Utilitarianism includes the need to be concrete. The abstract conception of time is meaningless, since it divorces the individual from realistically perceived units which he feels best suited to control.

This point of view may perhaps be better illustrated by abstract spatial orientation. The points of the compass mean little to the Kaska Indian. Instead, he equates himself to things of immediate personal significance, like the camp, a ridge, a range of hills, a river, or the direction of the current. The native patterns of temporal and spatial orientation may also be interpreted by saying that the concrete gives the Indian a sense of mastery, while the abstract means losing control. Mastery, therefore, is an aim of utilitarianism just as it is also related to egocentricity. In his orientation to time and space, the Kaska Indian is expressing both these dominant motivations in an attempt to preserve his self-sufficiency. It follows that any increasing readiness and ability to accept abstract temporal and spatial ideas would have to develop in terms of the native's world and self-views, or would follow from important basic personality changes.

Educational methods displayed in relation to children, with their neglect of principles and stress on learning by doing, also reflect the lack of motive to conceptualize, as well as the lack of interest in planning to which we will now turn attention.

Utilitarianism motivates the person's concrete attention to the present, whose significance is more readily perceived by the personality than past or future. The absence of idealizing or sentimental attitudes toward the past is related to both a focus on practical contemporary problems and an absence of intense interest in the future. As a result of an inability to cathect the past, the individual is unable to systematize his own life history beyond a series of sequential events, and often uninterested in even doing that within an orderly time frame. Examples of the inability to anticipate the future emotionally are provided from the ethnographer's discussion of the possibility that the Cassiar might become more familiar to white people, with a consequent influx of visitors. What would this mean to the Indians? Few men, with whom this potential problem was discussed, reacted to it with more than polite attention. The picture became even more extreme when individuals were hypothetically confronted with their own future. We have seen Gerald Leonard's reaction to this subject marked by a lack of personal ambition or aspiration and little evidence of genuine emotional interest.[14] Gerald is an adolescent. In Nels, a young adult, we find even less in-

[14] See above, p. 150.

6: Honigmann K-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12

Upper Liard

221 nated" in firmly built dwellings and subsisted on fish. Around the turn of the year "young fellows" set out to obtain dried meat from the caches which in some instances might be located 30 or more miles away. For most of the people winter remained a period of limited mobility and relaxed social intercourse. Sometimes, however, fishing failed and then the meat caches were quickly depleted. If fresh fishing sites proved equally unproductive the groups sought to make contact with another band, one that had been more fortunate in finding food. At such times men climbed to high places and scanned the horizons for smoke which in winter would be visible for long distances. Often it must have happened that all the neighbors in a tribal territory found themselves short of food, perhaps due to the cyclic fluctuation of the animal population. In such years, again like the other animals, the human population of the Cassiar also shrank. Thus a balance was kept between the people and the environment's resources. With the lengthening days of spring, the snow crusted and there came another favorable time to pursue game. Now beaves provided an important source of food, the people scattering to travel to family-owned beaver creeks. Upon the break-up of the river ice the beaver and muskrat quit their dwellings to travel. That served as a cue for the Indians to build or recover canoes. Then once more they reassembled around a fish lake, where the hot summer was passed renewing friendships. This is a brief summary of the food quest and annual cycle, whose reactions remain to be described in greater detail. The focus of the cycle was on food. One informant clearly recognized this when he remarked, "Old timers thought about nothing—just something to eat."

805 In the calendar of the community one sees more specifically the relationship between the people and environment, as well as the note taken of the seasonal changes. The year was divided as follows:

[illegible] (January)—"big burning moon." The term refers to the intense cold which caused dogs to get too close to the fire so that they sometimes burned themselves.

[illegible] (February)—"white eating moon" (5). Also [illegible], "cold tree moon" (5).

[illegible] (March)—"eagle coming moon" (5). Also called [illegible], "[illegible] everything i.e., good season to this country" (5).

[illegible] (April)—"snow crusts moon" (5). Also [illegible], "everything here moon" (5).

A reference for the period corresponding to May could not be obtained.

[illegible] (June)—"egg moon."

[illegible] (July)—"[illegible] moon."

[illegible] (August)—"[illegible] moon" (5) or [illegible], "everything ready, everything for moon" (5).

[illegible] (September)—"[illegible] moon."

[illegible] (October)—"[illegible] ground hog moon."

[illegible] (November)—"[illegible] moon." In called [illegible] "[illegible], everything [illegible] and yet not too cold."

[illegible] (December)—"[illegible] (?) moon."

222 The Indians secured food through gathering, trapping, hunting, and fishing. Girls
824 and women did the principal collecting, although men also sought vegetable products
262 in the course of walking through a favorable area while hunting. Berries were the main
items sought by collection and included, in approximate order of frequency, the soap
berry, high- and low-bush cranberry, salmon berry, raspberry, strawberry, cowman, and

6-Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nelson ND12

Upper Liard
Dease River

said the custom obtained among the Fort Liard Indians. It would seem as though the "half-roof" food ritual among the Upper Liard Indians constituted a local variation of the hot-food cast pattern. Tobias meat was scarce, a man entertained without his family always received enough food to bring some home to his wife. Gamesmiking was somewhat uncertainly denied, informants stating that a tendency to vomit could be inhibited by spitting on one's knife sheathed. 226

Dease River Kaska. When the environment signaled the arrival of autumn the Dease River people began their movement into the mountains in search of meat to dry and preserve for winter consumption. With the onset of cold weather several families repaired around some "low place" to fish and here they spent the bulk of the winter. In summer too the people camped in a large body near a good fishing site along a lake or river. Previous to assembling, word traveled between the bands designating the meeting place. 231

The periods of the year are revealed in the following calendar: [illegible]

[illegible] (January)—"pretty new long day moon."
[illegible] (February)—"pretty new middle of the winter moon."
[illegible] (March)—"[illegible] moon."
[illegible] (April)—"big night [illegible] moon."
[illegible] (May)—"long day moon."
[illegible] (June)—"pretty new change to summer moon."
[illegible] (July)—"middle moon."
[illegible] (August)—"[illegible] pretty new [illegible] moon."
[illegible] (September)—"pretty new [illegible] moon."
[illegible] (October)—"[illegible] moon."
[illegible] (November)—"pretty new change winter moon."
[illegible] (December)—"pretty new short day moon."

The calendar reveals the interest with which the Indians looked forward to the long daylight of spring and early summer; how autumn warned of winter, snow, and the spring year; and how the shortest day of the year provided a landmark for reckoning time.

Food had to be secured in all seasons. In summer and fall women and girls sought blueberries, low bush cranberries, strawberries, raspberries, salmon berries, soap berries, and currants. With the aid of a digging stick women as well as men dug for wild carrots. People also collected cotton grass, rose petals, spruce and birch fibers, willow bark, and spruce gum, but not wild rice or mushrooms. Goose eggs were collected in their season. Water, birch sap, and rose petals steeped in water furnished the main beverages. 232 234

In summer and winter trays caught wild animals for food. Bear, caribou, moose, and sheep were snared with hair- or five-strand braided bathtub line. In the case of caribou and moose the trappers extended fences from either side of his snare, such barriers consisting of poles lashed to trees and piled with brush. Deadfalls took bear, marten, beaver and smaller animals. Pitfalls found no place in the technology. Sometimes the Indians drove caribou and mountain sheep into surrounds where they could be shot or where they might trap themselves in snares. Sheep surrounds were built on relatively low 236